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dreamer travels, it is not necessarily implied that it is visible, and this brings us to another meaning of the word, and necessitates a widening of definition. We may say that the *asisi* is an immaterial entity, not necessarily visualized, but identified with, or acting as substitute for, some person, in this case the dreamer. Thus when Dasiga, the visionary of Manau,[1] received his commandments, it was his *asisi* that went up into the sky and saw God, and such a use of the word is not due to any external suggestion, as, e.g. of Christianity, but is typical of Orokaiva usage. Dasiga does not have a cut-and-dried theory for a 'soul' which leaves his body for the time being as a mere inanimate clod while it travels the skies; he believes that he himself ascended in immaterial form. His *asisi* is merely a substitute for himself in Dasiga's own mind; for he has never thrashed the matter out and formulated a definite theory of body, soul, and spirit. Such a conception is not limited in reference to human beings. Animals and inanimate objects may also have their *asisi*. When, for instance, a hunting magician feels a certain sensation in his right side, 'like the kicking of an unborn puppy in its mother's belly', he says that it is the *asisi* of a pig which has entered him. We must not press him too closely for a definition of the form of *asisi*. He has not thought this out and he cannot explain. He thinks that the pig has come to him in some form or other, altogether immaterial unless it be for that slight throbbing in his side. Again, when a mourner declares that the *asisi* of the dead is immanent in the mourning jacket of *baja* (Job's Tears), he has no definite idea of how it got there or of what form it takes, except that it is obviously both immaterial and invisible.

The best example of the reference of *asisi* to inanimate nature is found in the doctrines of the Taro Cult, whose originators were possessed by the *asisi* of the *ba*, or taro, itself. And it is instructive to note, as illustrating the confused conception of the form of the *asisi*, that the originator of the cult saw the spirits of the actual taro plants in the shape of young men who danced before him.

[1] See 'Taro Cult' in *Orokaiva Magic*, pp. 74 ff.

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the mourners at a funeral may be startled by any noise in the surrounding bush, the breaking of a twig for instance, which they will attribute to the *sovai* of the deceased. Approaching a village where a death had occurred in the early morning, I once heard a hissing noise in the scrub close to the track. I imagined that it was probably the hissing of a snake, but when I asked the native who accompanied me he answered in rather matter-of-fact tones that it was the *sovai* of the man who had died that morning. When I told the villagers some time afterwards they immediately gave the same explanation, and that without any collusion. It seems, then, that the first idea of the *sovai* is of something quite ethereal and invisible which haunts the village and betrays its presence by movements or noises. And the *sovai* may long remain in this immaterial form. It is thought sometimes to haunt houses and afflict their inmates with sickness. It also visits the gardens, and both here and in the villages may be seen small platforms (*barau*) of food offerings, sometimes with miniature ladders of the most fragile construction to assist the *sovai* in climbing up (Plate XXXV*a*).

But the *sovai* may appear, more or less disembodied, in human form. When one evening my boys were telling each other spookish stories, one of them, an Orokaiva, suddenly scrambled across the hut and sat there trembling in every limb. He had looked out into the darkness and seen the figure of a man recently dead in the village: what first drew his attention, he said, was the smell of death which attached to the *sovai*. Such hallucinations are of common occurrence. One hears of a mother who was mourning the death of her daughter, when she looked up and beheld the girl dancing before her in all her finery. Following the girl, who danced backwards into the bush, she suddenly found herself surrounded by *sovai* in human form, whom she thought to be hostile warriors. In such cases, of course, the *sovai* is an apparition or ghost in the usual sense of the word. So also the dead constantly reappear to dreamers in their familiar living form. Again, in the legends the *sovai* are eminently human though sometimes betrayed by some small evidence of death; as when the youth slain in fight returned in *sovai*

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form to his sweetheart, but was detected by a trickle of blood from his ear; or when the *sovai* woman revisited her husband and would have passed off for living had he not noticed the earth caked in her nostrils, and so suspected that she had risen from the grave.

Leaving this conception of the *sovai* as a ghost, visible or invisible, we may pass on to another with which it seems completely at variance: the *sovai* is supposed to take the form of some creature of the bush or river. No native has ever maintained that this form is subsequent, i.e. that the *sovai* is first a ghost and afterwards an animal, bird, or reptile, though there is little doubt that the ghostly form is thought of first when an individual has recently died. The general fact is that a native sometimes pictures the *sovai* in one way and sometimes in another. A great variety of creatures may be *sovai*—wallabies, cuscus, pigs, snakes, crocodiles, lizards, frogs, eels, bats, birds, and fishes; but it will be understood that of these species many members are normal or ordinary animals and nothing more, while others are *sovai*. The latter are commonly detected by some queerness or abnormality. For instance, if a snake were very active and writhed over much it would be called a *sovai*, simply, of course, because its slayers were startled or horrified into thinking it such. A lean and ugly cuscus, or a bush-pig that looked unusually rakish would excite the abhorrence of its captors, and a careful man would refrain from eating it. Sometimes the classification as *sovai* is retrospective. When a man falls ill he looks about him for possible causes, and recollects that he recently ate a flying-fox: he draws the conclusion that the flying-fox was a *sovai*. In several instances that came to my notice it was some association with the deceased that had caused the creature to be classed as *sovai*: when for instance a snake had been seen emerging from the grave shelter of a woman recently dead.

There is very little to say about the behaviour of the *sovai* animal. I was once told that thievish men turned into thievish animals such as pigs, rats, and flying-foxes—in which, however, there was no hint of retributive reincarnation but merely an association of ideas. The *sovai* creature

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775 825 is naturally regarded with fear and abhorrence: the case of the cuscus quoted above (p. 269) is one of the few in which it does not appear to possess a malignant and dangerous character. But it is not easily distinguished from the ordinary example of the same species, and it has often been killed and eaten before the difference is discovered.

This killing of the *sovai* animal raises the question of what we may call its constitution. It is obviously of a nature sufficiently corporeal to be killed and eaten. What is its relation to the deceased with whom it is identified? It would be tempting to suppose that the *sovai* in immaterial form possessed, or entered into, the animal as the evil spirits entered into the Gadarene swine. But I have never heard such an explanation from a native, and I do not know that we can infer that such a theory is in the back of his mind: on the other hand I have been assured that the animal *is* the *sovai*. Nevertheless, it survives what may be called the second death. A simple illustration of this belief is afforded by the following incident. A bush-pig found rooting a [187] garden was speared and killed. That night the owner of the garden (who happened to be my informant) was visited in a dream by his deceased elder brother, who explained that the pig was himself: he had been hungry and had come to his brother's garden for food (by which news the owner was deeply affected and refrained from eating any of the pig).

The theory that best squares with this belief is not that the *sovai* is only an immaterial entity which can enter a concrete body, but that it is an entity of exceedingly variable nature, sometimes immaterial and sometimes material, which can change from a mere invisible breath to the solid body of a pig, or from that again to the appearance of a human being. Such a power of metamorphosis is often met with in the tales of *sovai*. When, for instance, a girl was supposedly kidnapped by *sovai*, her rescuers at length found her in the bush sitting amid a circle of them; when the rescuers made bold to approach, the *sovai* became birds and flew away. Or again, in one village the mourners found themselves after nightfall in the garden of the deceased and

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to go to some place of sunshine where there are neither march-flies nor mosquitoes to bother him, but there is no definite idea of where this place is nor of what manner of life the *sovai* may lead there; and the description as far as it goes does not seem to suit the tangible examples of *sovai-ta-na* which I have seen. There are one or two tales of sky-dwellers but no hint of a heaven (though there is the extremely vague belief that some *sovai* go aloft, and are accordingly known as *i-sovai* or 'upper' *sovai*. Among these are the *diroga* or spirits of those slain in fight. It was never suggested, by the way, that these *i-sovai* were in any sense superior to the others.) There is also an interesting tale of the underworld into which a man follows his deceased wife, and finds there a very large population of *sovai*, including some of his relatives. But this, as the native often says, is *bibi*—'only a fairy-tale'.

In short, the only places of the departed which Orokaiva doctrine has definitely formulated are the *sovai-ta-na*; and these are natural features—hills, pools, and the like—which are associated with the several clans. In almost every case they are situated on the land belonging to the clan, and where this is not so it appears probably that they are situated on land which formerly did belong to the clan.

Attitude of Sovai toward the Living

We must lastly consider the mental and moral attitude of the living toward the dead. This will naturally depend upon the attitude which the dead are supposed to hold toward the living, and from what has gone before it will be seen that this latter attitude is of a mixed nature. It is alternately benign and malign, though there is little doubt that the latter is felt to predominate.

I shall first recall evidence that the *sovai* may be well disposed toward the living. The most striking instances are found in their association with magicians, weather experts, and the like. The report on the Taro Cult will be found full of such evidence. The Taro man, who is in effect a spiritual-horticultural expert, most commonly attributes his special powers to one of the dead, who has visited him probably

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in a dream and bequeathed him some instructions or a tangible 'medicine'. Sometimes the healer is in like manner indebted for his gift to a benevolent *sovai*; or the hunting magician may receive from a *sovai* the intelligence that a pig is waiting to be caught.

But apart from the favours which the *sovai* are supposed to bestow on specialists, we find that every gardener and hunter feels that the dead may send him success. It is true that the negative side of this proposition is more often in evidence, i.e. he is more prone to attribute failure to the displeasure of the *sovai* than success to their favour, but there is, nevertheless, the belief that they are able to make the gardens flourish and to drive the pigs into the pig-nets, and this is proved by the custom of adjuring the *sovai* to do so in the farewell address at the grave.

Even in the legends, where the *sovai* usually plays a very villainous part, we occasionally meet with one that is grateful or well disposed to the living. There is, for example, the case of the grateful warrior whose younger brother cared for his children after he had been killed, and who subsequently, in the form of a bird, warned this younger brother of an approaching raid. Nor did his gratitude stop at this, for abandoning his bird-shape he assumed that of a warrior, and held a large number of raiders at bay while his younger brother ran for help.

But such benevolent conduct on the part of the *sovai* is to say the least unusual, and it must be confessed that on the whole the Orokaiva regards his relatives and friends after their death as enemies. Any failure of the crops may be attributed to them; they may baffle the hunters; they may send the pigs to break through the fences and despoil the gardens. Sickness is perhaps ascribed more often to the malevolence of *sovai* than to any other cause. It is sometimes believed that the *sovai* enter the body in immaterial form, and sometimes that they may cause disease by a mere evil influence, e.g. by touching food. If they are eaten in their animal form sickness invariably follows. We have seen that they have more direct ways of wreaking their ill feelings, and in the guise of monsters they pursue, capture,

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happily of a less dangerous and disagreeable character. 794X
This was the Taro cult, of which a brief summary may be given here in order that the subsequent discussion of its details may be better understood.

It originated near the mouth of the river Mambare rather more than ten years ago, whence it spread throughout the Orokaiva people. The name 'Taro cult' has now established itself in Papua, though it may perhaps give a false impression regarding the movement as a whole. Taro or *ba* is the staple food of the Orokaiva, who are, like most of the peoples of Papua, almost wholly dependent on their gardens.

The new cult came into existence through the visions 794X
of an individual who believed himself possessed actually 787
by the spirits of the taro. In constant communication with them, he received their instructions as to the various rites which would ensure an ample crop in the gardens; and these rites, which were simple and, through their appeal to the stomachs of his followers, agreeable, quickly developed into a popular cult. The whole of this ceremonial was originally directed toward the placation of the taro spirits, and the name 'Taro cult', or worship of the taro, was not incorrectly applied.

But taro worship has not succeeded in spreading very 794X
far without a marked and significant change. The ritual 769
indeed has remained substantially the same, but throughout the great majority of the Orokaiva people it is intended for a placation, not of the taro spirits, but of the spirits of ancestors or departed relatives, who are believed to control the growth of the taro. The significance of this change will be discussed at greater length in another place. But it must be understood that the Taro cult in its modern and most commonly accepted form is not a worship of the taro, but rather of the dead. It retains its close association with the taro, however, in this way, viz. that the various rites are expressly meant to ensure, through the medium of the spirits of the dead, a prosperous taro crop. It is thus at once a fertility cult and a cult of the dead.

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The consensus of opinion, however, leads us back to the mouth of the river Mambare, and the name mentioned far more frequently than any other is that of Buninia. It will be noticed that Mr. Chinnery, who wrote soon after the beginning of the movement, names the same person as its originator, so that we may very fairly conclude that the honour of the prophet should belong to him.

It is interesting to note, however, that although we may be tolerably sure of the identity of the prophet, the accounts of the actual visitation, of the way in which he came under the influence of the Taro, are somewhat varied. According to Chinnery he was, by his own expression, 'struck down' by the 'spirit of the Taro' in his garden at Taututu, on the Mambare, and learnt from the said spirit a new kind of ritual. This ritual was to be practised by the people on pain of the destruction of their garden crops. Mr. Henry Holland, of the Anglican Mission, then at Ambasi, learnt that Buninia had been visited by the spirit of his father, slain in a cannibal raid on the river Kumusi. The slain man, or rather his spirit, travelling northwards in search of his son, had fallen in with a number of other spirits of the dead at Mitre Rock, a solitary and somewhat uncanny fragment standing out to sea by the Mambare mouth. Here they slew a large cuscus and ate it with taro. What was the significance of this ghostly picnic is not altogether apparent, but after it was over the wandering spirit found his son Buninia and revealed to him the elements of a new cult, all of which Buninia kept in his head for a while, and finally revealed in his turn to a very receptive public.

It is to be feared that there exists no little confusion in the prophet's head as to what really did happen. I will, however, put down the vision which he recounted to me when I met him in 1924. This was in the charming village of Deboi, where he now lives with his colleague Yaviripa, and which is in some respects the head-quarters of the cult. In their polite and friendly fashion the villagers were

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anxious to give what account they could of a subject in which they evidently take a great interest. Indeed, with regard to the Taro cult, informants have almost invariably tried their best to explain matters which are probably as hazy to themselves as to their questioner; for the native keeps few things intentionally secret from the white man save those which he fears will excite disapproval. Buninia began to describe the dream in which, at Taututu, he was first made to realize his possession by the taro spirit. He decided to do so with dramatic effects. Immediately a number of youths flew off to the near-by garden to see to their make-up, while Buninia, his head pillowed for convenience in the lap of Yaviripa, lay on the ground as if asleep. Soon seven or eight young men, gaily bedecked with coloured leaves of *Bayoga*, *Sirori*, and other Taro 'medicines', form up before him. Some carry drums; others have bundles of taro, thrown over arm or shoulder. These youths are the *Ba atiti*, 'spirits of the taro', who appeared in human form to the dreaming Buninia; and they are identified individually with the various kinds of Taro—*Kaiva*, *Porove*, *Ovivi*, and so forth.

Now they beat their drums and begin to dance. Buninia slowly rises, looks in astonishment at the gay figures before him, and then, suddenly shouting '*Ba, ba, ba, ba!*' rushes into the dance. The movements closely resemble those of the conventional Orokaiva *ballet*. The young men, dancing two by two, move gracefully and with that appearance of power which is so admirable a feature of the northern dance; while Buninia, a doddering old man, his person gaily decorated with coloured and scented leaves, whirls swiftly through and around the couples, still shouting his '*Ba, ba, ba!*' When the dance is finished the taro spirits deposit their bundles in a heap and retire. The dream is ended and Buninia (somewhat blown by his exertions) awakes, calls his friends around him, and proceeds to distribute the taro which the spirits have left behind.

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Time and again was Buninia visited by the same spirits in his dreams. Sometimes they left him the large knitted bags, called *ase*, which are used for carrying taro; sometimes the special kinds of pots and dishes in which the taro was to be cooked; sometimes the wooden prong or fork with which it was to be eaten. All these things he showed to his people and instructed them in their proper use. So also he taught them the dance and the various other elements, trivial enough, of the new religion.

But all this did not happen at once. Buninia volunteered the very significant information that from his youth up he had been subject to shaking-fits, some mild kind of seizures, which were not seriously regarded by his friends. According to his own view—about which he was entirely confident—these seizures had been caused from the beginning by the taro spirits in possession of his body, but he had not realized this until it all became clear through his dream.

What might be called the inauguration of the cult occurred at Taututu. Buninia was sitting quietly with his lime-pot in his lap and enjoying a little stimulant, when suddenly he found himself again attacked by one of his paroxysms. This time he began to shout, '*Ba, ba, ba!*' i.e. 'Taro, taro!' His brother, one Oriva, ran to his assistance, no doubt much alarmed, but Buninia dispatched him to call together all the neighbouring villages. People flocked to the scene from Deboi, Duvira, Tsia, and Bebewa. The new prophet continued to shake violently. As the people watched him they one and all fell into the same condition. Buninia harangued them and expounded the doctrines of the taro spirits. He fixed his attention in particular on his friend Yaviripa, and cried shame upon him for not making a feast. Meanwhile the *jipari*, or shaking-fit, continued to affect the bystanders; but at Buninia's word they returned, temporarily at least, to their senses, and were dismissed to their villages. They all 'had the Taro', and the new cult was launched.

Similar outbreaks occurred again and again. When

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Buninia was in a state of possession the people would swarm around, and, more than touching the hem of his garment, would lean on him, and embrace him in their eagerness to acquire the influence. When he showed the women the taro medicines—mere leaves or weeds—they would seize them, rub them over his limbs, and thrust them into the string bags which they used for carrying the taro; and men would apply their axes and digging sticks to his body in order that they might absorb his powers.

The Resident Magistrate came and said that the *Baigona* men were at their games once more. They told him he was mistaken, this was something new. So he left them to it. Next came the Bishop, who told them there was not much harm in the Taro, but that they should give up the shaking-fits. When the Magistrate came a second time they informed him that they had given up the shaking-fits, and now confined their activities to singing and dancing. Such was the account given me by Buninia and his friends of the early days of the new movement. It is probably far from accurate. The *jipari*, for instance, was not abandoned, but merely hushed up, because it was recognized that to a white man it was only subject for ridicule or disapproval.

While Buninia probably deserves the honour of originating the cult, there is one other rival claimant, so to speak, who cannot be dismissed. This is the woman Kosivo, now deceased, who was *bovatu*, or sister-in-law, to Buninia, and also lived in Taututu. According to this version (obtained from a different set of informants), Kosivo had been visited by the spirits of three men, who, fleeing at the first approach of the white men on the Mambare, had jumped from the frying-pan into the fire by encountering a hostile tribe at Lake Koena, who killed and ate them. The spirits of these three returning to their home found the woman Kosivo, had sexual intercourse with her, presented her (in a manner not made very plain) with the spirit of the taro, and left her in a

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trance as one dead. According to the teller of this story, Kosivo was the first recipient of the taro spirit. When she died and was buried all the mourners were attacked by the *jipari* or shaking-fit, on the following morning; they had received the taro spirit, and this was said to be the real inauguration of the cult. Buninia and Yaviripa hotly denied this story, and, after the manner of natives who are contradicted by other natives, said it was a lie. Buninia claimed that the first real visitation was to himself, and had occurred after the death of Kosivo.

As for the origin of the actual *jipari*, which forms such an important part of the cult, it is, as we shall see, no new phenomenon among primitive folk. In this instance, however, it may be regarded as proximately an inheritance from *Baigona*. The fashion—for there were fashions in paroxysms, although they were supposedly involuntary and uncontrolled—was somewhat different, but, as we shall find, different fashions were developed even by the different sects of the Taro cult. This subject will receive a fuller discussion in a later part of the report.

4. *Dissemination of the Cult*

Having described the immediate origin of the cult—a matter which even so soon has become garbled and conjectural—I may pass on to the manner of its dissemination, which is equally interesting and more certain. A professing Taro man is sometimes found to maintain that his inspiration and knowledge have come to him direct. He will not name the man from whom he has learnt the tricks of his trade and received his simple initiation. Such a claim, indeed, is in keeping with the usual theory of possession—in so far as that theory is explicit and accepted; for the spirit, whether of the taro or of the dead, invades a man's body of its own accord. It is also a natural result of the jealousy and ambition of the medicine-man (for that name is applicable enough to the exponents of Taro); he may give out that his inspiration and revealed knowledge have been direct and unaided,

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From the account of the origin of the cult it will be seen that the prophet believed himself possessed by the spirit of the actual taro plant. When once the cult was set moving many others besides Buninia began to receive visitations, and informants who lived in his neighbourhood, i.e. near the Mambare mouth, expressly stated that the visitations were from spirits (*atiti*) of the taro (*ba*). This they realized most commonly by means of their dreams. There were spirits of all the multifarious kinds of the taro plant, *Kaiva*, *Porove*, *Kivere*, *Ovivi*, &c., and not only of the taro but of other garden plants as well. It is too much to expect cut-and-dried dogma from natives, and there is confusion and haziness as to the nature and numbers of these plant spirits. There are probably at least a score of varieties of the taro cultivated by the Orokaiva, all of them readily distinguished by differences of leaf, stalk, or bulb. The taro spirits bear the names of these several varieties, but, according to the truly orthodox view propounded in the head-quarters of the cult, there are countless spirits for every variety. They join in disembodied forgatherings at the *Ba nyasi*, or Taro villages, Siri, Waiegi, Kome, and Duero—to name some of them—which are wooded hills along the picturesque coast between Deboi and Ambasi. They throng invisibly at the feasts in the real villages. As I was once talking with the Taro man Yaviripa (a rare opportunist in debate) he informed me that a taro spirit was close by us at the moment. He had met the spirit in a dream last night, and had been apprised of its intention to join the discussion; now a twitching in his shoulder told him that the appointment had been kept.

Except in dreams the taro spirits are invisible. It is noteworthy that in the dreams they always appear in human form. In the visions of Buninia, for instance, the dancers were taro spirits in the guise of young men. Some informants have actually used the expression *Ba embo*, or 'Taro man' (usually signifying the Taro specialist), for the taro spirit. A list was given of the

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various plant spirits and the forms in which they appeared. Taro (*ba*), banana (*bido*), sugar-cane (*dou*) were men; so also were the ornamental *Handoro* and *Laravi* (the latter being younger brother to the former); the betel-palm (*da*) appeared as a man carrying a lime-pot), the coco-nut (*mutari*) is a woman; various other ornamental or scented plants as young boys.[1] Such a list is too definite and detailed to represent a belief of wide acceptance; various seers see the spirits in various forms, drawing on their own imagination. In questioning the immediate followers of Buninia I heard no mention of a spirit of the dead, i.e. so long as the discussion confined itself to the Taro cult. On the other hand, though making constant reference to the movement in other localities, I heard practically no mention of spirits of the taro until I reached what was really the home or fountain-head of the cult. The one or two isolated allusions which formed the exceptions were made moreover with a conspicuous lack of confidence.

Now the time-honoured religious system of the Orokaiva seems to have its basis on a strong regard for the dead, a complex of affection, respect, and fear. There is a belief in the life after death, though it is not wholly pleasant or comforting to the believer. In fact he thinks little of his own life after his own death, but far more of the after-life of his relatives, who may do so much to prosper or to persecute those who survive them. The dead will haunt the neighbourhood of their homes in a variety of forms, mostly very terrible or horrifying, as those who have seen them will testify, and are known among the different tribes by a variety of names—*binei*, *sovai*, *embaki*, *siango*, &c. There is of course no perfect consistency in native belief on such a matter, though one general doctrine seems common to all the Orokaiva: this is the doctrine of animal reincarnation. After death a man's spirit reappears in the form of some creature—pig, snake,

[1] Certain of the ornamental plants grown in the gardens were pictured as girls. *Tammi*, e.g., was the 'Sweetheart of the taro'.

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775 that he met the *atiti* of the taro plant: those who have
192 since been infected by the cult dream, or profess to dream, that they meet their ancestors or deceased relatives. But they sometimes employ the new word *atiti* (simply because it is fashionable) instead of the old words *binei*, *sovai*, *embaki*, &c. The later converts grasped the word, but failed to grasp the idea. Buninia's conception of taro spirits seems hardly in keeping with popular belief; consequently it made but little headway. While the practices or ritual of the cult offered peculiar attractions to the masses, the somewhat new-fangled doctrine was unconsciously rejected, or, more accurately, relapsed into the old form.

X 794 A few instances may illustrate the close association
● 787 between the Taro cult and the dead. A Taro man of note
775 is taking the leading part in a garden ceremony, which
244 consists principally in treating the taro with medicines, and which is accompanied by the invariable feasting and singing. In the songs he acts as choragus or *vorsänger*, and the repeated theme of them is 'Father, give me Taro'. He calls on his father, one Sireri, by name to stand by in the bush and witness the dancing and conviviality which is going forward in the village. He describes to me how from time to time he is visited by his dead parent. Lying down to sleep he leaves a plate of taro by his side. Presently Sireri comes and eats a little, as much as a rat might nibble, for instance, and then gives his son a leaf called *Moso* for taro medicine, telling him to leave a fragment in the hole where the taro-top is to be planted. The dreamer does not see his father but hears his voice, and then wakes to find the leaf of *Moso* in his hand.

X 794 Another Taro man tells how he acquired his knowledge
787 from his brother-in-law, named Panjari. Panjari had been
775 visited in his sleep by the *sovai* of his father and mother. They had taken him away with them to the *sovai-ta-na*, or 'the ghost village', and there given him taro medicine and pig medicine, with instructions how to use them for

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his success in gardening and hunting. Panjari awoke from his sleep with these medicines, or at least the knowledge of them, in his possession, and in due course had passed them on to my informant. But the disciple cuts no ice without an inspiration of his own; so my informant in his turn receives dream visits from his own parents, and together they go into the gardens by night to beat the drums and sing, to make *tinogu*, as they call it, amid the taro. Another old man of the same village, anxious to bear out the evidence of his friend, declared he had heard this mysterious *tinogu*, and had screwed up his courage to the point of investigating it: before he came near enough to see the performers, however, they had taken flight and scattered. That the dead drummers were really in the garden is hardly more improbable than that a native should have ventured to investigate anything so spookish. But both stories, although hovering strangely between belief and fantasy, indicate that the concern of the Taro man is here with the spirits of the dead, not of the taro. So, again, we hear a Taro man crying as he holds up the shoot before planting,

Aiaka, mamaka, apija
Mother, father, grandfather
Ba nato kundo-gumbu
taro mine bring
Durate bureda piata imani
Set down in the garden, grant.

And we see, in the *ba oro*, or meeting-houses of the Taro men, little racks or platforms with food offerings, which they tell you are for the spirits of the dead. Lastly, in his subsidiary role of doctor, we see the Taro man, having practised all his remedies to no avail, setting up a spear with a bundle of rich ornaments for a placatory offering to the *sovai* who is afflicting the patient.

Such instances could easily be multiplied, but these are enough to show the trend which Taro medicine has taken. The original doctrine of the taro spirit seems to have survived principally in the neighbourhood of the

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6. *Prophets and Converts*

The means of disseminating the Taro cult have already been discussed in general terms: we have seen that they are (*a*) contact transmission and (*b*) active proselytism. In this section it is proposed to deal with the individual Taro man, and especially the way in which he becomes a Taro man. It is obvious to the native as well as to ourselves that the cult is passed on from one man to another, but it is generally claimed by the convert that he has received direct inspiration as well. Accordingly we may discuss the individual acquisition of the Taro under two headings, (*a*) Communicating the Taro, and (*b*) Direct Inspiration. Further, it will be of course understood that what is here set down is in the main the native's own explanation of these processes.

(*a*) *Communicating the Taro.* We have seen (p. 15) how Buniria in the early days not only instructed the people but communicated an influence to them by physical contact. There are many similar instances. Mere propinquity is enough. Thus we hear of a well-known character of the Wasida district, one Sihure (perhaps somewhat abnormal and on that account all the more celebrated as an exponent of the Taro), sitting surrounded closely by his friends who are anxious to receive the influence. Sihure chews betel very intemperately, until in due course the *jipari* or shaking-fit attacks him, and is unaccountably transmitted to the others who crowd around. Such an incident is easy to understand, but in others the connexion or the medium of transmission seems more than a little fanciful. A recognized instrument of passing on the Taro is the lime-pot: the master allows the prospective disciple to make use of his spatula and lime, and presently he, the latter, finds himself possessed. A man Taimi used to receive visits from the *hisi* of his mother, and would constantly be afflicted with *jipari*. The way in which he communicated this *jipari* to a friend is worth recording in that it shows what

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remote associations may seem causally effective to a native. Taimi happened to leave his lime-stick in his house; his mother, or his mother's spirit, spat on it; subsequently Taimi prodded his friend in the stomach with the stick, by now in some manner galvanized, and his friend was seized with a paroxysm.

I have already referred to certain individual Taro men of distinction. The number of those who follow the cult in the Northern Division is not to be computed, but there are among them men of distinction and reputation who may be called leaders and who might be if necessary catalogued. Their pre-eminence is due partly to their own personality (for it is not every native who has the makings of a magician), and partly to mere priority. Thus, if one man communicates the Taro to another, the latter will probably recognize the former as his superior. This respect for superiors may sometimes take a comical turn. To see a Taro man, his face covered with paint and his limbs with streaks of clay, his body stuck about with sprigs of coloured leaves, and his wits bemused by betel-nut—to see such a man offer a grave salute, in the exaggerated style of the Native Constabulary, to his superior, whose attire and demeanour even outdo his own, is almost as diverting to the European as it is impressive to the native. This habit of deference to the initiator results in a sort of hierarchy, very ill-defined, as might be expected, because the cult shows such a tendency to split up into minor sects, but nevertheless containing the seeds of an interesting development.

The disciple sometimes has to undergo a kind of probation. Having once acquired the Taro he must, for a considerable period (until, indeed, it is thoroughly established or ingrained into him), observe certain taboos. The chief of these is the taboo against washing. There are instances in which the enthusiastic acolyte foregoes the pleasures of a midday bathe for as long as eight months. When the Taro cult had crept insidiously into one of the mission schools, its presence was first

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X 794 792 431 ously, and awoke to the realization that he had received the Taro. When subsequently Buninia paid a visit to Katuna, all the friends of the recent convert contributed to the reward—a pig and a number of ornaments.

I have known an old man express himself delighted at his son's conversion to *Diroga*, declaring that he meant to reward the man who had initiated him. When we hear the initiator declaring (probably with truth) that he means to make a return present to the old man, we understand that the payments—if so we may call them—are neither formal nor exacting. The payments for 'curing' are sometimes of a different character, and will be referred to again.

X 794 ● 787 (2) *Direct Inspiration.* It has been said that the Taro man, besides acknowledging his debt to another Taro man before him, commonly claims to receive a direct inspiration of his own. 'Taking the Taro'—as the expression goes—means primarily being possessed by the spirit (either of the taro itself or of the dead), and the first symptom of this possession is some kind of involuntary movement of the body, perhaps nothing more than a twitching of the shoulder. This usually takes place in the learner while he is in some close association with the teacher, i.e. the latter communicates the 'Taro' to the former. As we have seen (pp. 31–2), contiguity or contact or some more or less remote association is required between the two. But it is not merely a sort of spiritual transfusion. Ideas are a little mixed on this point, but in the great majority of cases it appears that the learner is possessed by a different spirit from that which possesses the teacher. (This presumption on the part of the native makes it difficult for him to explain why the possession of any man usually takes place through association with one already possessed. The reason seems obvious enough to us, but perhaps is not sufficiently profound for native metaphysics. At any rate this point was never satisfactorily explained.)

Besides being indebted to the teacher in this somewhat

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Besides being indebted to the teacher in this somewhat 794 X
vague manner for his actual possession, the new Taro 787 ●
man may receive from him certain 'medicines', and will [789]
learn from him the various points of Taro ritual. The latter, of course, he can see with his own eyes, as in the Taro cult there is little secrecy.

But now there follows, almost invariably, the stage in which the new initiate *dreams*; and in his dream he has communication with the spirit, his own particular visitant and benefactor. In the course of these communications he receives all over again the medicines and the ritual of the Taro, but yet, as we shall see, with some little point of difference. Several examples of such dreams have been given already, and more of them will appear incidentally in the course of the report, so that it is not necessary to describe any at this moment. The study of native dreams is in itself an interesting one, and the Orokaiva has his own methods of interpreting them, which incidentally provides a valuable illustration of the logic of magic. Suffice it here to say that the Orokaiva believes in dreams, i.e. he believes that they are true portents of the future, that they contain reliable messages for the present, and that in them the spirits may appear to the dreamer. Further, he believes not only in his own dreams but in those of others. When we add to these facts the chicanery of the magician, we can understand why the Taro man always publishes abroad his own dream, which will place a supernatural sanction upon his supposed inspiration. Indeed, it is a habit to call in the dream to reinforce a statement. There is a certain legend, that of the man-slayer Totoima, which is widely known among the Orokaiva. When I first heard it I asked my informant (a young man) where he had got the story, and believed him when he said that he had dreamt it. Subsequently I heard that tale from a dozen different informants in a dozen parts of the Division; the young man had merely desired credit for its invention. It is not altogether improbable that natives, excited by new experiences, upon which their thoughts dwell overmuch by day, might

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dream of them also by night; but we cannot avoid concluding that a great deal of this supposed dreaming is the deliberate figment of a very wide-awake set of schemers. Even while this is so, however, the fact remains that the dream, true or false, goes a long way to convince the credulous native; and it might be forcibly argued that large and important movements—like this Taro cult, for example—have often had their beginning in nothing more than the mere accident of a dream.

It was said that the visionary, whose vision is little more than a reproduction of what he has learnt from the teacher and observed with his own eyes, still adds some little detail of his own. Thus a Taro man, who makes no secret of the fact that he received instruction and medicines from another, announces that his father has appeared to him in a dream and made known the secret of a new medicine, leaving a fragment in his sleeping hand. Another has had a series of dream visits from a certain female relative named Bagani. She has left behind at different times the wood-plate *betaia*, the taro-fork *orai*, the small cooking-pot, &c., all of them utensils belonging to the Taro etiquette. But he has another distinctive dream-gift. Clearing in his garden one day he came across a stone and merely set it aside. That night the woman came to him in a dream and told him the stone he had passed by was a Taro stone; it bore her name, 'Bagani'. This name the dreamer was to assume for his own. He must keep the stone, and when the taro was being planted out place it on the platform (*karau*) at the edge of the garden. It is by such distinctive touches as these that the Taro men gain individuality. They hanker after a little independence. Some new medicine, some odd detail of procedure, will give it to them, and, what is more, bolster up their claims by making it appear that they are really inspired and in direct communication with the spirits. Constant added touches or minute changes have in course of time given rise to the sects or denominations, and perhaps to the more or less pronounced

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variants of the cult which will be later described in section 10. The following pages will give an account of the various points of Taro ritual which have been passed on from one exponent of the cult to another, and which have been from time to time republished, so to speak, by the dreamer.

7. *Ritual and Practice*

The singing, drum-beating, and feasting—no very exacting ceremonies—which constitute the chief ritual of the Taro cult, are together known as *kasamba*. The word is one of those made popular by the new cult, and is freely used in outlying parts of the Division by people who are as ignorant of its real meaning and derivation as I am myself.[1] At a large *kasamba* the scene is little different from that of the ordinary Orokaiva feast, except for a new style of singing, a certain exaggerated etiquette in the setting forth of the feast, and the excesses of those who lose control of themselves.

Hospitality seems always to have been a cardinal virtue with the Orokaiva, as indeed with most natives. A village takes a just pride and pleasure in feasting its neighbours, and long before the day of the forgathering there have been platforms conspicuously placed for the accumulation of the victuals. The taro and other garden products are gathered with a touch of ceremony which was probably absent in pre-Taro days. Led by the principal Taro man, the whole village files out to the gardens and returns with a load of tremendous tubers, while the drummers who accompany the party thump their drums with an odd mixture of solemnity and jubilation. The guests, when they arrive, are hailed clamorously with shouts of '*Oroda, oroda!*' which is the distinctive cry of the Taro men; and the youths of the village will rush hither and thither, brandishing their weapons, and tearing down banana leaves or coco-nut

[1] One informant said that *kasamba* meant originally the 'junk' of taro, i.e. the cooked fragment of appropriate size. It is a point of Taro etiquette to cut up the taro into somewhat smaller junks than used to be the fashion.

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Mr. Holland informs me that the Spear men were first noticed by one of his teachers at Ambasi, near the Opi mouth. Since then the movement has spread very widely in the Dobodura and Wasida districts, but we may remember that it appears to have had its origin farther north and nearer the fountain-head of the Taro cult.

The word *diroga*, common in one form or another to all the Binandele dialects, bears a number of meanings. The fundamental idea is 'pertaining to the spirit of a *slain* man'. In districts into which the new *Diroga* cult has not penetrated, and where it is quite unknown, the word is nevertheless used for the 'spirit or ghost of the slain'. Among the various shifting conceptions of the life after death there is one (tolerably uniform) that the spirit of a man slain in battle differs from the spirits of those who succumb to sorcery or sickness. It has always this distinctive quality, that it travels aloft, not on the earth or in the water: it may take the typical forms of fruit-bat, fire-fly, or meteor; and it may be heard whistling or piping as it flits overhead in the darkness.

One or two other meanings are probably derivative. *Diroga* may stand for the *pona* or feast made by the relatives of a man *killed in fight*. Secondly, as Mr. Elder states, 'the word means vengeance or punishment'. The connexion is obvious: never a man was killed among the Orokaiva but his relatives thought of revenge.[1]

Now the *Diroga* man, like most other Taro men, is possessed by a spirit of the dead; but it is invariably the spirit of one who was slain. That is to say, a *Diroga* man is so called because he is possessed by a *diroga*. The difference is fully recognized by leading votaries of the newer cult. They point out that one who is possessed by the spirit of the taro itself or by that of a man who has died 'in his bed' may indeed be a Taro man, but he has not the qualification necessary for a *Diroga* man. One or two examples will make this qualification clear. A man

[1] *Diroga* (with a capital *D*) will stand for the *Diroga* cult; *diroga* for the spirit of the slain man.

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named Baiho was attacked by fever; he bathed, but his fever continued; then he was seized with *jipari*. He did not understand his plight until a certain *Diroga* man explained it to him. His father Parata had been killed long ago in a raid by hostile neighbours: now the *diroga* of Parata was possessing him. Subsequently Baiho received a dream-visit from his slain father, and was presented with a certain kind of Taro named *Orori*.

Another man witnessing the dancing of a party of *Diroga* men, found himself under the influence of the shaking-fit. It was explained to him that the *diroga* of his slain brother was causing the trouble, an interpretation which a subsequent dream verified beyond question.

Another informant, possessed by the spirit of his father, likewise a true *diroga*, saw the figure of the slain man standing before him with his hands behind his back, just as the corpse of the victim is set upright with its hands bound to a pole behind it. Such instances could be multiplied. The *Diroga* man believes, or professes, with absolute consistency as far as my inquiries go, that he is possessed by the true *diroga* or spirit of a slain man.

One or two of their peculiar mannerisms may find explanation in the conception of the *diroga* itself. It used to be their habit to strike postures, looking up into the sky or into the tree-tops. This was where they hoped or pretended to see the *diroga*, who always fly overhead. A recruiter informed me that the thrusting and jabbing with spears was directed at the spirits, which may be so, though I have no verification. One characteristic gesture of the *Diroga* man is a sideways jerk of the head such as a bather makes when he wishes to shake the water out of his ear. A native has given me a somewhat grisly explanation. An *emi tataru*, i.e. one who has been done to death with the terrible *emi* or disk club, will, in his immaterial *diroga* form, be continually jerking his head to one side to clear away the blood which is clogging his ears. There is a tale, as pathetic as it is gruesome, of a lad who left his sweetheart to go with his fathers and

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X 794 753 754 curing, it is to be feared, goes the implication of sorcery. It may not be without significance that the two or three instances of implied sorcery which have come to my notice are all associated with *Diroga*.

X 794 [411] Within the *Diroga* cult itself there is already disintegration. The majority are *Ki-embo* because of their association with the *ki*, or spear; but there are also *Gishi-embo* and *Asivo-embo*, who affect respectively the *gishi*, or pineapple club, and the *asivo*, or wooden sword. Concerning these latter I have only the scantiest information; and no more regarding a distinction between the 'Bush' *Diroga* men and the 'Salt Water' or coastal *Diroga* men.

There are several other more or less important variants of the Taro cult of which I may describe three, viz. those of the *Eriri* men and the *Hobora* men, and thirdly the cult of Manau.

X 794 158 ● 787 [764] The *Eriri* or 'Rainbow' men are numerous in the Dobodura district. Some years ago one Aragata was mourning the loss of his brother, and after the Orokaiva fashion was embracing his dead body as it lay on the *habara*, or exposure platform, before burial. When Aragata descended from the *habara* he found his legs unsteady, and was forthwith taken in a fit of *jipari*. In the course of this fit, he says, he became aware in some manner that his dead brother's spirit was the cause of it. Further thrills were in store for Aragata, however. That night he dreamt, and in his dream went in search of his brother. The search was fruitless. Aragata found no trace of his kinsman, but came instead to 'the place of the rainbow', where he met one Songe, a man of long ago. Songe (of whom my informant could give no clear account) questioned him and condoled with him, and finally said, 'I give you Taro' (i.e. I make you a Taro man); 'whenever you see a rainbow you will be seized by *jipari*'. Aragata professed that the sight of a rainbow always had the promised effect upon him, and further, that the rainbow and nothing else could produce that effect. Soon, however, he had an enthusiastic following,

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and it is certain that his followers did not need a rainbow to send them into a fit. The *Eriri* men carry spears and have a more or less distinctive form of *jipari*: they grip the spear and stand, trembling and dithering, for a minute or more at a time. Other *Eriri* men, recognizing their confreres in this condition, will come and shake them by the hand. The aim of the *Eriri* men is primarily to make the taro grow, but one witness informed me that when he saw a rainbow in the sky he would know it was the right time to go pig-hunting.

The *Hobora*, or 'Rooster' men, are widely distributed in the central and southern parts of the Division. The founder of the cult is said to be Garepa of Puhemu. According to Garepa himself, his brother had died and he was mourning, having in his grief actually imposed upon himself a taboo on taro and bananas. In this condition the dead man came to him and caused a fit of *jipari*. Subsequently in a dream he met his brother on the beach near Buna, and was informed that henceforth he was to be a *Hobora* man. *Hobora* is the name both of the domestic fowl and of a certain variety of yam. Garepa was to plant his garden with taro and yams, and also to perform a distinctive dance in imitation of the rooster. The dance (of which he gave a demonstration) was a good example of the Orokaiva native dance, with its usual grace and character. Other informants assured me that Garepa in his dream had actually witnessed a number of domestic cocks performing their dance, but the prophet's own account of his experience was less picturesque. The aim of the *Hobora* men is once more to prosper the gardens, though it does not appear that any special prominence was given to the yam *Hobora*. As a proof of his efficiency Garepa brought four immense taros to exhibit at our interview; these, he said, would show what he could do with his *jipari*. Other exponents of *Hobora*, however, declared that they were not Taro specialists, but curers of the sick.

The Manau cult has been described by others (vide

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X 194 pp. 3 and 4, foot-notes), but I may give a brief account of it here for the sake of comparison with the Taro cult, of which it may be regarded perhaps not as a variant but as a rival. The originators were Dasiga and Bia of Manau, near the mouth of the Mambare, and the beginning of the cult was almost contemporaneous with that of Taro. It has been very plausibly suggested that the Manau prophets, not having received an invitation to the inauguration of the Taro cult at Taututu, were offended or merely jealous, and set up a rival business of their own. If this be so the competition was an unequal one: the Manau cult never achieved a wide popularity, and has long since become a memory.

X 194 192 157 Of the two originators Dasiga was no doubt the real visionary. He is a man of striking and almost fanatical appearance, whose perpetual sternness of demeanour does not hide his real stupidity. He was formerly the village constable of Manau. Now he is a mission convert, and has adopted Christianity with what I imagine to be his characteristic intensity. Bia is a man of a different cast. My acquaintance with him is very short, but long enough to endorse Mr. Chinnery's opinion that he is a 'notorious sorcerer and a most plausible rogue'. He is a man of strong personality and magnificent physique, and to these advantages adds the prestige of his former rank of corporal in the Armed Constabulary. It may well be that he turned to profit the queer temperament of Dasiga; he saw the visions which Dasiga had seen, and entered into a spiritual partnership in which he supplied most of the brains. We might credit Dasiga with some sincerity, and Bia with a great deal of cunning. In passing I may record the same impression regarding Buninia and his collaborator Yaviripa—the latter a singularly alert, intelligent man, the former a visionary old duffer. It is significant that both Bia and Yaviripa were formerly *Baigona* men.

X 194 192 ●187 Dasiga dreamed and went up into the sky where he saw God, and received from Him certain instructions.

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As he recounted them to me they were commandments against 'swearing',[1] theft, adultery, and anger, and two positive injunctions—to be like the missionaries and like the white men. He also laid down a form of service which has been well described by Mr. L. A. Flint, formerly the magistrate in charge of the Ioma District. The only record of this ceremony is the rotting wooden pillar in Manau around which the worshippers, led by Dasiga and Bia, were wont to assemble.

It is to Mr. Henry Holland that we are especially indebted for information about the Manau cult. He had several meetings with the principals which are amusing as well as instructive. On Christmas Eve of 1920 he was in the rest house at Totoadari when Dasiga sought him out and requested an outline of Christian teaching. Mr. Holland willingly complied, and when he had finished Dasiga said, 'I knew all that before'.

On the second occasion, at the old mission station of St. Andrews on the middle Mambare, Dasiga asked why the taro was not growing well. Mr. Holland made some suggestions of a horticultural nature, to which Dasiga replied, 'No, they say it is because of God's anger'. Thereupon followed a long theological discussion in which Dasiga took the part rather of a disputant than a learner. Rising finally to take his leave, in the very dignified manner of which he is capable, he burst into a volume of unintelligible gibberish. When he had finished he addressed Mr. Holland again in Binandele: 'Do you understand?' Mr. Holland confessed he did not. 'God's praise,' said Dasiga, and left him.

Some time after this Mr. Holland visited Manau and was met on the beach by one Bairi, a minor leader. He was well groomed, with his hair neatly clipped, carried a walking-stick, and greeted the visitor with an English 'Good morning'. He wished to show him a letter from Jesus Christ, he said, and produced from wrappings of calico and bark-cloth a stray missive which a neighbour-

[1] i.e. abuse, wrangling.

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ing planter had sent to the master of the launch *Misima*, asking him to call for copra. Explaining how he had come by this letter, Bairi said he had eaten a large pine-apple, and that after (apparently as the result of a disturbance less terrible than he deserved) his spirit rose up into the sky, where he saw Jesus Christ, a white man with a beard. He was informed that 'something had fallen for him', and having been conducted down from the sky by a ladder, subsequently discovered this letter. Mr. Holland was much struck by the man's earnestness in telling the story. Bairi had been instructed by Jesus to visit the Lutheran Mission on the river Waria, where apparently he merely announced himself and then returned. Jesus had also told him that he was to be 'the New Guinea Missionary'.

After this interview with Bairi, Mr. Holland entered Manau and witnessed a service led by Dasiga, who was seated on a box in the midst of the worshippers. The preacher rose to greet him but broke out again into unintelligible incantations, shaking his head, and affecting to read out of the palm of his hand. He would finish his incantation by intoning *Jesu Kerisu kaena-embo*, 'Jesus Christ the man for us'; otherwise his words were entirely meaningless. Mr. Holland asked what he saw in the palm of his hand, and was told that Christ's messages appeared there. Asked more precisely what the messages were, Dasiga replied, 'This must not be written in a book'. 'But', said the missionary, 'God is open and hides nothing.' Admitting this, Dasiga (who must have been something of a dialectician) replied by a question: 'Where do your people go when they die?' 'They sleep, then rise again and appear before God.'

'Well, it is just the same with us,' replied Dasiga, and Mr. Holland abandoned further questioning.

There seems to have been nothing of taro worship in the Manau cult, though it was made plain that the prosperity of the crops depended on a proper observance of the new rites. The *jipari*, however, was as essential

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a feature of this as of the Taro cult. Since the establishment of the Mission Station at Manau (and later at Duvira) by Mr. S. R. M. Gill, the *jipari* has died out.

One of the important beliefs of the Manau prophets was that the *embo betari*, i.e. the dead, were coming back to visit their living friends. Dasiga had seen in a dream a fleet of steamers and canoes filled with spirits of the dead and cruising off shore at night-time. Bia, and subsequently two other men of Sanananda (another village in which the Manau cult took hold), were favoured with the same vision. But at this distance it is not easy to discover the early tenets of the Manau faith: they are probably confused in the memories even of its foremost exponents. This is especially apparent in the matter of Kekesi, the powerful spirit who watched over Mitre Rock near the Mambare mouth. Although Mr. Chinnery could elicit a circumstantial account of Kekesi, his steamer *Kesi*, and his association with the rites of Manau, yet, after only ten years, the association seems to have been forgotten. I heard no mention of Kekesi at Manau. To this farrago of Christianity at Manau contributions must have come from the long-established but distant Anglican stations at Ambase and St. Andrews, and from the Lutheran station at Morobe; and no doubt some of the aping of European habits was introduced by ex-police and indentured labourers. Nowadays, I believe, the village is wholly Christian.

11. *The Causes of the Taro Movement*

The observed facts of the Taro cult having been dealt with it is now permissible to adopt a more critical or explanatory method. Its origin and dissemination have already been treated descriptively. In this section I propose to reconsider these questions and offer certain comments.

Cultural Mutations. The Taro cult followed so closely on the *Baigona* cult that it is commonly said to have 'taken its place' when the latter was suppressed. There is, it is true, a very wide difference between their respective

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culture contact and transmission. The Taro cult and others of its kindred merely supply some evidence for the old evolutionary hypothesis which is supplementary rather than antagonistic to that of culture contact and transmission. To continue the metaphor again, we might, while making allowance for the gradual change of society by minute variations, lay more stress on the sudden, widespread, and important movements for which I have suggested the name of cultural mutations.

Dreams and Visions and Social Movements. If we examine how these mutations have come about we find that in native theory, and as far as the Taro cult is concerned, it is through the somewhat bizarre agency of a dream or vision. Numbers of such dreams have been described or mentioned in the course of the report. The majority of them, no doubt, are sheer fabrications, designed to secure for the dreamer the credit of direct communication with the spirits. If he has lighted upon some idea which will lend a little individuality to his version of the cult, he will affect to have dreamt it. Then he publishes abroad his idea as if it were conferred upon him in a dream-visitation, and thus wins for it a supernatural sanction. Even when the dream is fictitious it has its effect upon the impressionable native who, as we have observed, is a firm believer in dreams and what they portend.

But there can be no doubt that some at least of the dreams of Taro men and others are genuine. Sometimes the visitation takes the form of vision or hallucination rather than of normal dream. The comparative frequency of mental abnormality among these natives has been remarked. It may be evidenced by trance or seizure, and any visible symptom is regarded as a very strong corroboration of the dream, vision, or hallucination which accompanies it. One highly characteristic phenomenon among the Orokaiva is the retirement into solitude, in which the subject lives like a hare-brained recluse, supporting himself on what he can find, and after

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his forty days and forty nights in the wilderness returns or is rescued by his friends. The native explanation of this curiously frequent phenomenon is that of capture or kidnapping by the spirits of the dead; and the crazy, but by now chastened, victim usually has some astonishing tale of his encounter. Such a case, no doubt, was that of the originator of the *Baigona* cult.

As for the dream of Buninia in which he saw the Taro spirits, there is no conclusive reason to doubt that it was genuine. The fact that he found it, so to speak, very profitable, in that it brought him so prominently before the public eye, is sufficient reason for his dreaming the same dream a number of times. One may as readily believe that the first dream was genuine as that the subsequent dreams were false. In considering the case of Buninia we should bear in mind also the fact that even in his boyhood he was admittedly subject to some kind of seizures. The seizures themselves would be considered to substantiate his dream-theory that they were caused by taro spirits.

In the two cases of the *Eriri* and the *Hohora* men, the founders were both mourning the very recent death of their near relatives. In such circumstances the native gives way to his grief in a manner which we would ourselves consider almost improper, and the distraction of sorrow is more likely to cause mental vagaries in him than it would in those who make a practice of self-control. Again, Dasiga of Manau is a somewhat erratic and ill-balanced character, and there need be no doubt that his visits to heaven and his colloquies with God were, in the first place at any rate, bona-fide visions.

Where such visions are attended or followed by trances, epileptoid seizures, or other visible signs of abnormality, they receive in native eyes a strong confirmation. Such bodily seizures are very commonly ascribed to spirit possession. Even where this is not the case they are queer enough and sometimes horrible enough to strike awe into the hearts of those who wit-

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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ness them. Thus the seer, the neurotic, and the madman gain a power and ascendancy over the normal by their very abnormality.

It is not by any means maintained that the mutations of culture have their invariable rise in dreams, sane or insane. But the frequency with which these have been put forward as explanations of the new cults makes it possible that they are at least to some extent the original source of them. If this be really so, then we see movements of importance based on the baseless fabric of dreams or even on the hallucinations of the insane.

The Spread of the Taro Cult. It was suggested that the spread of the Taro movement, rather than its actual origin, was a matter of practical interest. The general methods of its dissemination have already been described. It is here proposed to debate this question anew and to suggest reasons why the dissemination has been so complete and so successful. The matter might be considered from two angles—the acceptability of the cult and the susceptibility of the native.

(1) *The Acceptability of the Cult.* We have seen the reputedly conservative native receiving with open arms a very considerable change in his religious life. But we have also noted the newest or the most startling features of the Taro cult toning down so as to harmonize better with the existent cultural background. I refer to the way in which the worship of the taro spirits, an idea which is alien to native habits of thought, has gradually yielded place to the old-fashioned worship of the dead.

While this adaptation has taken place the general activities of the cult have remained the same. The feasting, the singing, and the placatory offerings are performed or offered with the same zeal, no matter whether they are in behalf of the taro plant itself or of the dead. The *iipari* is still indulged in with the same abandon, no matter whether the taro spirits or the dead have inspired it. This all bears out the view that, in native religion, theory or doctrine is wholly subordinate to action or

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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stables who descended on Aurida to make an arrest. They met with unforeseen resistance and found themselves engaged in hand-to-hand combat with the alleged sorcerer and two of his friends. The most formidable of the policemen, a muscular man of somewhat truculent appearance, succeeded in overpowering the old sorcerer, but the other two did not meet with the same success. One of them, wrestling for possession of a stone club, received a blow in the stomach from the flat of his antagonist's foot, which compelled him to relinquish his hold and lie on the ground. The third was pitted against an ex-cook-boy who, as it was naïvely explained, had learnt from his employer how effective a weapon was the closed fist. In the face of this exotic knowledge the village constable was severely worsted. But now, although the honours rested indisputably with the alleged law-breakers, the latter were overcome by the enormity of their last offence. They killed a dog for the outraged constables by way of conciliation, and quietly submitted to arrest. Once at the station they were punished for resisting the police but acquitted on an unfounded charge of sorcery; while the informer, one understands, was punished in a well-deserved if somewhat irregular manner for bringing about all the trouble.

The suspicion that death is due to sorcery is sufficiently common to give rise to divinatory experiments by which the identity of the sorcerer is to be discovered. Several methods are recognized, though it is not to be supposed that divination is practised in every case. In a method well known among the Orokaiva a burning brand is set up on the outskirts of a village in which a death has recently occurred. The relatives of the dead man observe it carefully and when it proceeds to fly away, carried by the ghost of the deceased, they endeavour to follow it, for it will come to rest on the house verandah of the guilty sorcerer. The process has certain variants. In the typical case the burning brand is set up on a stump and attached to a long string, the end of which is held in the hand of

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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754 one of the friends of the deceased. While the brand con-
787 tinues to burn, this man lightly jerks the string, uttering the names meanwhile of all those likely sorcerers who may have been guilty in the case under investigation. Suddenly the brand falls and is extinguished, and the name which was mentioned at the crucial moment is that of the culprit. It is not difficult to suppose that a little extra vigour in the pull, conscious or unconscious, might lead to the victimization of an innocent man who for some reason was in the bad books of the diviners. When, as is sometimes supposed, the brand takes flight through the bush in the hand of the ghost and is traced to the house of the guilty man, it is equally possible for the same sort of abuse to enter into the experiment. Nothing is commoner than a dead brand or a few lumps of charcoal on a man's verandah, and this kind of divination might find almost any one guilty. Indeed, there is a possibility of foul play on the part of the diviners. As Mr. Beaver observed, 'Unfortunately for the psychic value of the proceedings, I understand the imprint of a human hand may often be discovered on the charred wood'.[1]

754 An incident in my own experience illustrates another
787 well-known method and will serve to show how much of
775 suspicion, preconception, or even spite there may be in what appears a sincere attempt at divination. Among the
824 Orokaiva's somewhat vague and ill-assorted ideas of the life after death there is this, that shortly after a man's decease his ghost may take the form of the bird *kombu*. The *kombu* is a bird of black plumage, seldom seen, and has for some reason acquired a character of uncanniness. Its usual cry is one of four syllables and is said to be *Kau, kau, kombu!* but evidently the bird has a way of varying its call, and one may expect by paying careful attention to hear it pronounce the name of the sorcerer who brought its human existence to an end. A number of different examples would argue a greater power of vocal expression than any untaught bird could well

[1] *Loc. cit.*

2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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possess, and they are hardly to be explained on any hypothesis save that a man often hears just what he expects to hear. In the instance of which I am speaking the friends of the deceased, one Handau, had on several recent occasions heard the early morning cry of the *kombu* on the outskirts of the village. It had said unmistakably *Ohusa !* and *Samberota !* sometimes the one, sometimes the other. Two of the mourning relatives approached me in the clandestine manner which the weirdness and gravity of the matter seemed to warrant, and suggested that I rise before daybreak on the next morning, when it would be possible, by hearing the *kombu* itself, to verify what they said.

At dawn of the following day the awakening birds were uttering their various calls when I took a seat in the centre of the village together with the two informants, who were listening in a state of highly strung expectancy for the ghostly bird to repeat its message. We had hardly composed ourselves for the event when the solitary rooster of a neighbour, not ten yards away, fairly split the welkin with a cry as nearly resembling *Samberota !* as any bird short of a parrot could have uttered. Yet this loud crowing of the cock did not seem to attract the attention of my companions, or if it did was looked on only as an annoying interruption. Their attention was focused on the voice of the *kombu*, discernible among the increasing babel of notes at perhaps one hundred yards' distance. It was uttering a cry of four syllables the last of which seemed occasionally to be cut off, so that I felt bound to say they framed the words *Samberota* and *Ohusa* as well as any other.

Encouraged by this verification my informants explained that Handau, some time before his death, had visited a somewhat distant part and lived for a day or two in the house of Ohusa. The purpose of his visit to the place had been to set up a pig-trap of the kind called *samberota*. It was true, they admitted, that this kind of pig-trap was usually known as *bagi*. But Bagi happened

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to be the name of one of Handau's relatives whom he was forbidden by etiquette to address or speak of save by a respectful synonym. Hence it was quite understandable, indeed necessary, that he should use the alternative word *wabiwiti*.

The fact that Dura had accused Handau shortly before his death was enough to suggest that he might have made magic against him. The two significant cries of the latter were enough to make the suspicion a certainty. And the friends of the dead man begged me to write a 'paper' and to have the suspect put under arrest and sent to the Government station for trial. It is important I should add that both these men were unmistakably in earnest and believed they heard correctly what the *kombu* said.

In view of such cases as these we may fairly conclude that the suspicion of sorcery is out of all proportion to the actual practice of it. For every man who of set intent practises the black art there are many—one cannot say how many—who are falsely accused of doing so. Of these some are sorcerers only by repute and perhaps seldom hear the charges which are secretly laid against them by the gossips. Others may hear the charges and even welcome them, play up to them, and perhaps be induced by experiment really to be guilty of them. We have already arrived at the conclusion in section 6 that even where black magic is actually practised the only serious effects are indirect or mental. In the present section we have seen that the actual practice is by no means equal to the alleged practice. The previous conclusion may therefore be repeated with more confidence. It is not the practice of sorcery which does the harm, but rather the belief in it, and especially the fear of it.

We have last to consider the attitude which is adopted toward the maker of magic, whether good or bad, first by his fellow villagers, and second by ourselves. Under both heads it will be necessary to bear continually in mind the distinction between black and white magic.

4: Chinnery & Haddon E-5 (ca. 1915) 1917
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FIVE NEW RELIGIOUS CULTS IN BRITISH NEW GUINEA.

E. W. P. CHINNERY, F.R.A.I., AND
A. C. HADDON, Sc.D., F.R.S.

I.

E. W. P. CHINNERY.

I HAVE recently been engaged in observing the origin of two religous cults known as "Kava-Keva" and "Kekesi." They are animistic practices that, notwithstanding their prohibition, have already become powerful, and extend from the Gira River (8° S. lat.) to Buna Bay.[1]

The belief in ghosts and spirits is a predominant characteristic of the northern native. In almost every tribe I have observed the propitiation of family ghosts with individual offerings of food by ordinary persons to secure the vitality of their food supply, and by sorcerers to stimulate their charms. Ghosts are invoked during ceremonies by divination to reveal crimes and criminals. Food offerings to ghosts are made during death feasts and during certain initiation rites. The house of initiation and the paraphernalia of the dance are believed to have spiritual powers, and when the paraphernalia are thrown into the river at the completion of the rites, they are invoked to smite the enemies of the dancers.

Yet, although the spirits and ghosts are legion, I had nowhere come across any conception of a supreme spirit until the outbreak of the Kava-Keva[2] movement, when the villages

[1] It may be well to note that the Gira River opens out about 8° S. lat. on the north coast of British New Guinea, and that the mouth of the Musa River is four miles to the south, both being in the Mambare Division. Buna is on the south of Huinsetter (Goschen) Bay, about 8° 27' S. lat., and is in the Binaua Division. Kerema, Mount Victory, is an native village, nearly 3000 feet in height, a little to the west of Cape Nelson, which is about 9° S. lat.

[2] "Kava-Keva," is a Motuan word which is used extensively throughout the tribes of British New Guinea by adoption to express a condition of unsteady or irresponsible either temporary or permanent.

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3. THE KEKESI RITES.—Closely following the commencement of the Food Worship on the lower Mamba, a curious movement was introduced to the people of the village Manau, on the coast near the mouth of the Gira River. These people were formerly of Gadura and Babewa on the Mamba. The movement was introduced by one of their chief men, an notorious sorcerer and a most plausible rogue named Bia, who represented himself as the earthly agent of a Spirit called Kekesi.

The man Bia himself gave me an account of the origin of the movement, and I reproduce here his own words. "Early in November 1914 I and my friend Yavevi were returning to Manau from Buna. We slept at the point opposite Mitre Rock. During the night I was visited by the Spirit of a man named Boinumbai, who died a long time ago at Gauoro village. I was told by this Spirit that a very powerful Spirit named Kekesi watched over all the people from the Mitre Rock (Kekesi) and controlled their food supply. Kekesi was a friend of Jesu Kerisu (Jesus Christ), and was able to see all that happened. Kekesi was going to make some laws for the people, and if they obeyed them, he would look after their interests, but if they disobeyed them, he would injure their food supply. Boinumbai then departed. A few nights later Boinumbai's Spirit again visited me at Manau, and with it came the Spirit that Boinumbai introduced as Kekesi, the big chief of food and a strong Spirit, 'all the same as Jesu Kerisu and Government,' whom he told me to listen carefully to and to take notice of. Kekesi sat down and commenced making a gurgling sound in his throat, all the while bouncing violently and rapidly up and down, but keeping his sitting attitude. I was very frightened until Kekesi stopped doing this. But Boinumbai told me not to be frightened, as Kekesi was reciting the laws which he wished to be introduced by me to the people on his behalf. When Kekesi had finished, Boinumbai gave me this interpretation of Kekesi's speech:—'You, Bia, are to tell the people I am their chief, and they must obey me in all things. My wishes will be conveyed through you to the people from time to time. Disobedience will mean the loss of his food supply to the defaulter. The people are to hear and obey the Government. The people are to observe the moral code of the tribe. Food is to be properly cultivated, and no wastage is desired by me. Songs in my praise are to be offered frequently. All must take part in these songs, and enact them in the manner I prescribe. The songs and manner of offering them are:

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Reading	Chorus ..	*Be ino nuv* (repeated several times).
Reading	Solo ..	*Kekesi lolo na be ino nuv.*
Reading	Chorus ..	*Iviva! Iviva! Iviva! Ta be Iviva!*
Reading	Solo (slowly) ..	*Kai be Kekesi be ia be na Iabanavui oki ta.*
Reading	Chorus ..	*Iviva! Iviva! Iviva!*
Reading (beside signal and spear-shield)	Chorus ..	*Halliluai! Halliluai! Halliluai!*
Reading (with drum)	Chorus ..	*Bisunubi ti ti be.* *Kekesi ti vunubi ti ti be.* *Ba ti vunubi ti ti be.* *Kekesi ti vunubi ti ti be.*
Reading (as above)	Chorus ..	*Halliluai! Halliluai! Halliluai!*
Reading (with drum)	Chorus ..	*Tisa ti vunubi ti be.* *Ohasi ti vunubi ti be.* *Kekesi ti vunubi ti be.*

(Thus recite all names of taro in turn.)

Kesi is the name of the steamer in which I travel from place to place. And the songs I am giving you must be sung regularly by all the people, otherwise trouble will come to you. The vitality of your food supply depends upon the manner in which you obey my desires. When going to and from the gardens the people are not to straggle along, but to fall in, similar to the police working for the Government. The following commands may be given to the people whilst working in the garden or coming to and from the same:—*A kush! A sha! A shun man! A shun be! A hon de shen! A som!* These commands are to be issued by the man Yavevi.' This is all that was said to me on that occasion, and the two Spirits left me. Shortly afterwards Kekesi came by himself, and, in a different manner to his previous speaking, said the following:—'Wak kaise Dasiga kerere. Wai kaise Dasiga kerere! Kekesi Boinumbai kononini tai vavini koninino ato bos Kesi Jesu Kerisa ked kom turn bush etai taba kai sol manau giama vavini alem bush Jesu Kerisa Kekesi dugus igit goot dugus goot work work gardini finati giama Dasiga nart Mamau soro sino Government Missionary all same Kekesi met Missionary turo sino.'[1] Kekesi's speech was not in the Binandere language. I understood it, and it means that one boy had stolen his brother's wife, and that Kekesi was very angry with him and desired me to tell him so. The man's name is Dasiga. Kekesi has not visited me since."

[1] The expression appears to be an idiomatic mixture of New Guinea words of various districts and of many words that are unknown, but are obviously translations of Be, and I guessed when Iaboanavui had finished that Kekesi (Be) wished me to repeat to me the teachings and conversation of Kekesi. He plainly "had memory."